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USDOC FOR 4420/ITA/MAC/MCQUEEN
STATE ALSO PASS USTR/CHINA OFFICE/STRATFORD/CELICO
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: Typhoon Chanchu Blows into South China Causing
Death and Damage

REF: A) Guangzhou 14818, B) Guangzhou 10542

¶1. (U) Summary: Typhoon Chanchu, following its strike on the Philippines, headed toward eastern Guangdong Province late last week with landfall on Thursday, May 18. Preparing for the typhoon's landfall, over 600,000 persons were evacuated, with numbers reaching more than one million by the time the typhoon departed. Reports indicate that 23 persons were killed by floods and landslides triggered by the typhoon in Guangdong and Fujian Provinces. The National Disaster Reduction Center, Ministry of Civil Affairs, estimated total economic loss for Guangzhou RMB 1.47 billion (USD 184 million), for Fujian, RMB 3.68 billion (USD 459 million). Provincial reports indicate 3.8 million acres of Fujian farmland have been damaged with another 520,000 acres damaged in Guangdong. End Summary.

Typhoon Leaves 23 Dead, One Million Evacuees

¶2. (U) The powerful typhoon struck China on Thursday, May 18, leaving at least 21 people dead: 15 in Fujian province due to floods and landslides triggered by the typhoon; and, eight in Guangdong Province. At the same time, media reports say 28 Vietnamese fishermen were killed and many more were missing after their boats sank or went missing in Chinese waters due to the storm, though Chinese naval vessels provided food and water to survivors found on Vietnamese fishing boats following the typhoon. The Chinese government announced that over 100,000 vessels had been ordered back to port before the typhoon hit the area. After making landfall, the typhoon was downgraded to a tropical storm and returned to the sea southeast of Shanghai late Thursday evening.

¶3. (U) On Wednesday, May 17, before the typhoon made landfall, approximately 300,000 people were evacuated from their homes in Fujian Province with an additional 320,000 people evacuated along the coast of Guangdong Province. Following Typhoon Chanchu's landfall, the number of evacuees in these two provinces reached more than one million people. Evacuees are currently being housed in tents, schools, government warehouses or staying with relatives.

Damages Estimated at USD 600 Million

¶4. (U) At the Central Government level, Vice Premier Hui Liangyu expressed great concern over the typhoon. The

National Disaster Reduction Center, Ministry of Civil Affairs, estimated total economic losses for Guangdong at approximately RMB 1.5 billion (USD 184 million), and for Fujian at 3.7 billion (USD 459 million). There have been no requests for international or central government assistance so far and relief efforts are being handled primarily by provincial and local governments, though a joint delegation made up of representatives from eight ministries arrived in Fujian to advise recovery operations. Hope Weiner of the International Federation of the Red Cross stated that the China Red Cross was sending a team down to the affected area to investigate. To date, the CRC has only sent limited supplies, such as blankets, to the regional Red Cross offices in Fujian and Guangdong.

Provincial Situation and Recovery Efforts

15. (U) Provincial and Chinese Red Cross sources provided the following information on damages and government responses.

Fujian Province

Reports from the Fujian Provincial Government provide the following information:
Impacted areas: 425 townships in 60 counties (most in Zhangzhou City in Southern Fujian - Zhangzhou was recently profiled in ref A).
People affected by the typhoon: 3.155 million
Houses collapsed: 9,600
People evacuated: 709,000
Death: 15 (caused by landslides)
People missing: 4

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Area of farmland damaged: 1.54 million hectares (3.8 million acres)
Direct economic loss: RMB 3.8 billion (USD 475 million) (including RMB 601 million (USD 75 million) in damages to water facilities)

Recovery efforts: The Fujian Red Cross delivered to Zhangzhou's Zhangpu County, which is severely hit, recovery supplies with a total value of RMB 165,000 (USD 20,000), including power generators, quilts, instant noodles, tents, and medicines. Other supplies from Guangzhou will be delivered directly to Zhangzhou City.

Guangdong Province

Impacted areas: 289 townships in 35 counties/districts (most in Shantou City of Eastern Guangdong - Shantou profiled in ref B).
People affected by the typhoon: 7.78 million
Houses collapsed: 4,879
Deaths: 3 (Five more died in traffic accidents)
People evacuated: 343,278
Area of farmland damaged: 211,000 hectares (521,400 acres)
Direct economic loss: RMB 4.64 billion (USD 580 million) (including RMB 2.63 billion (USD 328 million) in losses to agriculture, RMB 864 million (USD 10.8 million) in losses to industry and transportation industry, and RMB 418 million (USD 52 million) in damages to water facilities.)

Recovery efforts: Guangdong Deputy Party Secretary Ou Guangyuan headed the prevention and recovery work for the Province. The Provincial Government website stresses official efforts to evacuate people before the typhoon made landfall, and to deliver relief supplies to the areas hit by the typhoon. At this point, little additional information is available.

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